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has died. A shallow hole in the sand is dug by hand, with a stick, or with a large shell. Usually nuts are transplanted at sunset. Natives say that if the planter carries someone, preferably a young boy, on his back while planting, the tree will bear more fruit. Trees on the leeward side of the island are sturdier than those on the windward side. The best harvests are gathered from trees between 10 and 60 years of age.

Good qualities in a coconut are considered by Lauans to be a thin husk and a thin shell to admit the sun, which sweetens milk and growing meat.

Ono has the reputation for having the best flavored coconuts, Lakemba for the greatest quantity of nuts. The soil of Kambara is a little too sandy for coconuts. The trees growing on Ndelaioloi are said to bring forth the largest number and the best fruit on the island. Mothe has many coconuts. On Fulanga and Ongea the trees are small and do not bear so well as on the other islands. Namuka has large groves, but many trees are unhealthy.

There are several coconut pests. *Mate ni niu* (coconut death) is caused by the purple moth (*Lezuana iridescens*) and is greatly feared. The branches of the tree turn rust brown or black, drop, and the tree dies. In recent years the colonial government has sent an insect-eating fly (*Ptychomyia remota*) imported from the Malay States, to the infected islands and the pest is rapidly retreating. Coconut crabs, of which there are many on Wangava, break the nuts on the ground and eat them or leave them to spoil. On Komo, a rat is said to climb the tree and "eat" the young nuts. Some coconut trees are killed by a fern which grows in the branch fork.

Every part of the coconut tree is used. Coconut oil is indispensable. Copra is still used in limited quantities in exchange for western trade goods, especially tobacco, kerosene, and cloth. The meat is an important food for human beings, pigs, and chickens. It is the first food given to a baby. The milk is drunk and used in preparing fish and greens. The husk is used for sennit and kindling, the wood is used for fuel and is split into roof laths, the leaves are used for baskets, and the midribs of the leaflets for brooms. Whole leaves are made into mats for house walls, floor mats, and thatch. The root is used as medicine and the reticulum serves as a medicine bag. The spathes make the best torches. The branches are used in fishing, and the elastic thick middle rib, freed of its foliage, is used as a lash.

The harvest of nuts for copra is picked off the ground by women. Several nuts are carried on one arm pressed against the body and one nut is carried in the free hand of the other arm. They are placed in a row on the path or thrown into an enclosure fenced with vertically placed sticks. The nuts are split by kneeling women, the meat poked out with a stick, shell, or cane knife and put into baskets. It is then placed on boards, usually on the beach outside the grove, to dry.

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Hocart's statement (15, p. 126) that there is no spitting at the *kanusivi vale* ceremony does not hold for southern Lau. 342

The spitting ceremony marks the strict division of the interior of the house into three sections (p. 64), but, inasmuch as the house has been built by the communal labor of the whole village, the villagers have the privilege of entering the main doorway and sitting down in the lower part of the house at any time.

House Protection. Long poles and fish spears are usually kept leaning against the roof to hold down the thatch. On houses exposed to strong wind, coconut leaves are tied together in pairs by the upper ends and hung as roof weights, astride the ridgepole, to prevent the wind from lifting the thatch or carrying away the roof. The natives say that during hurricanes they crowd [731] together in small low houses and hold down the roof with their hands.

Occasionally dwelling houses are protected from evil spirits by magic prophylactics. They are usually directed against particular spirits. For example, the owner of the house in which I lived in Tokalau had planted a clump of giant taro (*via*) beside the steps leading to the main entrance to protect the inhabitants from Tutumatua (23, p. 127), an evil spirit, who had caused the owner's wife to become ill. If Tutumatua, who had elephantiasis of the leg, attempted to visit the house again, he would see the giant taro plant with its swollen, knobbed roots, and, ashamed of the resemblance of the roots to his leg, would leave immediately. A branch of *uthi* leaves is occasionally hung inside a house to protect it from evil spirits. 342 751

House furnishings

Shutters (*i songo*) are attached to the doorways of a house and used as a protection against wind and rain. There are two main types of shutters: *i songo mbekambeka*, made of *mbekambeka* mats (p. 203) hung on hinges of pandanus to one side of the doorway; and *i songo tambakau*, made of *tambakau* mats (p. 203) sewn together with pandanus, hung above the door, rolled, and tied with sennit. Wooden doors (*i songo papa*) hung on metal hinges to a wooden door frame are seen occasionally in modern houses. Formerly a hearth (*matandravu*), used for cooking and lighting, was set off by blocks of wood in the lower part of the house to the left of the main entrance. Hearths are still found in a few small dwelling houses on Fulanga. The smoke rises through the thatch or the doorways and protects the house from mosquitoes. When mosquitoes are particularly prevalent, green leaves are burned in fires built on the foundation mound outside the doorway to windward. 342 354

For light, wood from the *sevua* (*Vavaea vitiensis*) tree is burned in the fireplace. Besides firelight, oil lamps (*thina*) are used. The lamp consists of a scraped half coconut shell, in which a wick made of the midrib of a single coconut leaflet (*sasa*) wrapped in barkcloth is placed upright either by stick- [824] 373

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373 ing it with *mbu* juice to the bottom of the coconut shell, or by inserting it into a coconut leaflet knotted in the form of a cross (called *lakamba*) at the bottom of the coconut shell. A small amount of boiled coconut oil, called *molia*, is poured into the shell and the wick is lighted. Sometimes the wick is inserted into the flesh of a half coconut or papaya and used in the same way. Boiled coconut oil used for lighting is made by grating ripe coconuts, straining the gratings after they have stood four nights, and boiling the oil. The natives say that oil lamps were not known before the Tongans came to Lau. According to Moto of Undu, little light was used at night in the olden days because the natives feared enemy raids.

Torches are made by splitting the upper ends of five or six coconut spathes (*mbarawa*) tied into a bundle or held together by hand. The split ends are lighted. Six or seven *ngasau* reeds bound together are sometimes used as a torch.

352 The floor space of the house, with the exception of the space under the couch (*vata*) and the hearth, is covered with coconut-leaf mats (*tambakau*), laid over coconut leaves or beach sand (*langere*) according to a definite pattern. The floor under the couch is covered with pebbles. In a house with four supporting posts the mats are arranged as follows: one central row of mats, placed end to end, extends down the middle of the floor from the main entrance to the *longgi*. On each side of the central row is another row of mats, placed side by side. One row of mats placed end to end, extends around the interior of the house (excluding the *longgi*) behind the supporting posts next to the wall.

Floor mats of pandanus are placed over the coconut-leaf mats. Properly, according to the natives, one large mat, called *i thoni* (*tevutevu* in the Mbauan dialect), should cover the central section and extend into the lower part of the house and one small mat, called *kotokoto*, should lie across the upper end of the house. The *i kotokoto* mat is used by the owner and people of high rank. This arrangement is, however, seldom seen today. Three floor mats usually cover the floor: a coarse mat at the lower end, a finer mat in the middle, and a fine mat at the upper end of the house. Every house contains a few large smooth stones or blocks of wood used as weights to hold the mats down when the wind blows.

A large, high couch, called *vata*, composed of a wooden frame covered with mats, occupies the uppermost end of many houses. The couch is from 70 cm. to 1.5 meters high. Its length is determined by the width of the house between the main supporting posts, and its width is about 1 meter less than
[554] the depth of the upper part of the house (*longgi*). In a few houses owned by ranking men, the couch is screened from the rest of the house by a large piece of the highly valued Fijian tapa, hung from the tie beam with sennit. The natives say that formerly there was no couch and that the floor of the upper